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UNCLAS KINGSTON 001884

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FOR ECA/PE/C/WHA/EAP RHARVEY, INFO WHA/PDA EDETER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SCUL](#) [OEXC](#) [KPAO](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: 2005 CULTURE CONNECT SPORTS ENVOYS

1. Summary: PAS Kingston hosted Culture Connect Sports Envoys RaMell Ross and Alvin Green. Four basketball clinics were organized mainly for kids between 6 and 12 years of age, although several individuals between the ages of 13 and 25 also participated in each clinic. A total of 240 Jamaican children and 80 young adults, mainly from Kingston's inner-city communities, enthusiastically participated in the clinics. In addition to demonstrating the techniques involved in the game of basketball, Ross and Green (who both recently graduated from U.S. universities) "connected" with all participants, with whom they held frank discussions about setting goals in life and achieving them in spite of whatever obstacles they might face; the need to stay in school in order to receive a solid education; and ensuring a balanced diet to maintain good health. PAS Kingston videotaped the first clinic that was organized by the Jamaica Basketball Association and took photographs. A young writer from a leading daily newspaper attended two of the clinics and interviewed the Sports Envoys, representatives from the sponsoring local organizations, and the police. End summary.

2. Dates: July 27-29, 2005, Q4, FY-2005.

3. MPP Goal: Democracy and Human Rights (Mutual Understanding).

This Culture Connect program enabled the Mission to demonstrate to Jamaican kids - mainly from the inner-city communities -- the valuable contributions that RaMell Ross and Alvin Green are making to American society. The staging of these free basketball clinics has strengthened U.S.-Jamaica relations as so many young people had the opportunity to enjoy the rare talent of two talented American basketball MVPs and learn from their motivational talks. Post was successful in getting young Jamaicans to focus on U.S. society and realize that their dreams can become a reality if they work diligently.

4. Basketball clinics were held at the National Stadium basketball courts and the inner-city Kingston communities of August Town and Allman Town. The newly-formed USAID-sponsored Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) played a key role in the organization of the final basketball clinic. (PERF was established to improve relationships between the citizens and the police in the inner-city Kingston community of Grants Pen.) A Ministry of Health Healthy Lifestyle Session that promised to be information and interesting was planned for the morning of July 27 but had to be cancelled due to the delayed arrival of the Sports Envoys in Kingston.

5. A young writer from the Daily Observer's weekly "Teen Age" supplement (circ. 50,000) wrote a full-page article on 8/2: "I hope that programs like these will be successful for the betterment of communities and Jamaica as a whole, because our nation is depending on a better generation for tomorrow". Participants were in agreement when they said: "I hope they come back next year" and "We need more clinics like these".

6. Agency Support: Raymond Harvey was in constant contact with Post's Cultural Exchanges Specialist to ensure that Post had the information that we needed in order to organize a meaningful program for the Sports Envoys, given the short lead-time.

The Georgetown-themed t-shirts were very much appreciated by as many participants as we could supply at each clinic. Such was the demand that, ideally, Post would have had 300 t-shirts and 10 basketballs to distribute to participants and organizers, but we realize that this was not possible.

7. Non-USG Support for the Concert: PAS Kingston collaborated with the Jamaica Basketball Association, USAID, U.S. Peace Corps volunteers, the American Chamber of Commerce, leaders of inner-city communities and local police to make these clinics a reality. In addition to staff time to help in the staging of these clinics, these organizations contributed sodas, bottled water, light refreshments and, in some cases, lunch. This was a most worthwhile program that post recommends be repeated on an annual basis. Regards from Kingston. Tighe